ROUGH?: return to Judy Jacobs after proofing

[redacted]

Must Remain in
Transcription Room

M2444

Amity School
(Beginning of 2nd year)
Thursday evening

September 5, 1974

MR. NYLAND: Everyone is here, huh? All the children? Are there some missing? Couldn't come? No, they are coming - then we have to wait. We're waiting - and all the parents I hope - no some more... As I say endless - it seems endless number of children. Who's the oldest of the children? Eric Donald Batterson. Are you the oldest? Yes. And who's the youngest? Are you? Sasha, Caleb, Leopold? Such a range anyhow, huh? That has been the difficulty in making some arrangements with room and with curriculum for what we should do., the emphasis for me always remains on real school, as I said last year, extension of the family. So, for that the parents become interested.

I don't know really why I sit here and assume that I know something about school. I really don't. My father was a very good teacher and I've been interested and also I've taught a little bit at Columbia, but that doesn't qualify me as yet. I look at it as a general form of how to keep children with the family together as long as they can. You know because when children grow up and they become influenced by the outside world, they take on many times that what is impressing on them and being very impressionable you have to have a relationship with a child that it tells you truthfully what they experience. Now that is the problem with a family - and sometimes it's very difficult,when children grow up,to keep that trust because they come in contact with different kinds of children from different homes and then one is apt to be as a child a little secretive when you don't want to tell certain things that you are a little ashamed of. And so I feel that if the family life can be extended

into school so that then children grow up in a similar atmosphere as a family, you can maintain trust and when they then reach an age when they can go to some other kind of a school and so forth, at least you can have a chance to really educate them. And that is the reason - one of the reasons - why I try to emphasize the necessity of a family extending through a school. And that is why we never should get away from the idea that parents should teach, in preference even to good school teachers. It's not that we can do it - I know that, but as many of the parents that can come - as many of them as are willing to come and can spare the time, the better it will be for the school as a whole.

So I'm very glad that we have had our first year of experience. I think we have learned a great deal, and to some extent you can even say it has answered the purpose for which we originally have started it. I think there is cooperation. There has been enough teaching, and we have conformed to the general laws of education à la Albany. I think we are safe in that way. We run a little risk by having too much at the Guesthouse, but I don't think it matters that much really. So the emphasis has been and still will be for this second year on that what is required in accordance with the law as an education at school and a certain kind of discipline. That divides that what you wish to teach into two groups. One is a requirement and we cannot get out of it. The other is very many other subjects. you would like to teach and which some of the children would like to know about. We have to draw the line a little bit. I would have wanted the mornings/really for all children to teach ordinary 3 R's and whatever is necessary. And the afternoon more free, but with the little rule that we have it is not always possible. And I think that Donna has arranged some curriculum which has been discussed by all of you, I think, and I hope it's satisfactory. If it isn't, we'll change it. Always change it within the framework which the law puts on us, but within that, each person can have their ideas, particularly based on experience. And let's be quite open in the future about the different things which are no good, or not quite as good as you could wish, when there are difficulties that come up, that you have a chance to talk it over.

There will be a difference for people who would like certain children to be

taught this, that and the other. I think you have to be careful about that. Maybe we look sometimes at teaching children what we think they ought to have, and sometimes we have forgotten what it was to be a child. And then there are times that I definitely remember, and I know they do exist, that a child is not interested in teaching. They really don't always want to learn and they want to learn some things that they really don't care for. Don't force those things on children. It may be true that, for instance, you like to teach Spanish, but maybe not all the children who are capable who are in the class would like that. Be very lenient about it. Only allow those who really want to learn. You want children really to learn. You want them to remain enthusiastic because if you have an enthusiastic class you have solved the discipline.

You see, that is the relationship that should always exist between children and a teacher. A teacher has to make it so nice and lovely that the children have no time even to get into each other's hair. There will be difficulties, of course - when you're at lunch and periods of a little rest. I don't want to go into detail about that. You know more about that than I do, but I hope that for this coming year again and again we will work together, really to find out what is the right thing for the children and what we, as grownups, have to do in order to give the children their reasonable demand and not overdo it, and not make children too wise too soon. There is a Dutch saying. It says: too soon ripe, too soon rot. Don't overfeed them. Children must remain children as long as they can because in a child, when there is inhibition (?), when there is freedom, when there is openness, when there is a wish to talk, when there is trust, you can have a relationship with them, and you can help them to build up what they really want to know, and you have a chance to guide them. But if you overload them and too soon because you would like to teach, it doesn't mean necessarily that they would like to receive. That's the one side of it. The other one is discipline.

Children have to learn to take every once in a while - not all the time - every once in a while authority of those that are older than they are. Maybe sometimes they don't like it, still they have to be taught how to like it for their sake, and the best way to make them like it is to be enthusiastic about what you are teaching. A child have to learn authority from father and mother, and also from teachers. If we don't

solve that problem for little children, they will have a hell of a time when they grow up to be twelve and sixteen years old. You will not have any authority to tell them and they will go out in the world and God only knows what this world, at this time, is giving them. They will become affected by it and they won't know what to do because they have not been trained sufficiently to know when their own little desires tell them they would like to do this and that and the other. It's a very simple thing when you look at it, when you see a child wishing that and wishing something else and you say, no you can't have it because it's not good for your teeth. It's quite obvious in such a case that you say don't, you cannot overeat because you get sick. Try to remember that you can make a child psychologically sick when you overfeed him or when you discipline him too much, and when you don't discipline them enough. Those I feel are the requirements of a school because when there is a unity among the teachers, whoever they may be, that that is really a requirement for them to be able to give that to the children, your school will be a success. And it doesn't matter so much anymore how many there are because you have to instill in them such a wish for wanting to find out.

A child needs knowledge in the very beginning. It does of course need feeling, but don't become sentimental. Knowledge is most important because that's the way the brain starts to function. After a little while, the feeling starts to function. after some time. Then the different other organs start to function. But if you want to feed any child something that is worthwhile, it has to be clear and simple, logically connected, clarity in the words you choose, in the way you present them and particularly this presentation has to be that you really care and that you wish to teach and help them, even if they you wish(?) to become a little obnoxious.

You see, that is about all I want to say because it is so simple for me in the beginning to talk a little bit about it and then to hope it might work out. And if it doesn't work out in this way, like I say, with a few simple words, it is up to all the parents and the teachers to get together every once in a while when you wish it and need it, to talk until doomsday until you get everything straightened out. You know how it is with the Cardinals when they have to elect a new Pope, they sit in the

Vatican in one special room - you probably know this - but until they all agree on the Pope. They are locked up from the outside so they cannot even get out and the only way that they can - it's an old custom - indicate that they've finally selected a Pope is to put a little piece of paper or something that has smoke in the chimney and the people outside watch the chimney. And when the smoke comes out of the chimney, that means the Cardinals can be released. This is the way we sometimes have to do - to come to a conclusion with all the best intentions in the world and without any desire to be prejudiced or at least to be open to each other to see what is reasonable and what isn't. Ford will have a hell of a time to get all the economists together to agree about what to do about inflation, but I do hope that that (?) we'll stick it out long enough that something will come that will help this country.

That's an overall picture, and to compare it with this on a very small scale, we have the same problem. How can we learn to agree? How can we be open? How can we care enough that we want to find out what they other person means when he says this and that and be patient in wishing to understand it, because if there is dissent among us as teachers and parents, it will reflect on the children, and they will not be able to look up to those who teach. And when they lose respect for their teachers, they will miss something in their later life. I wish, of course, that when they remember this little bit of a school and this little bit of an experiment on our part, that they can remember with pleasure that what actually is here and can continue to be created - an atmosphere not only of patience but of real insight of what is needed for the education of a young child and the willingness on the part of all of us to get together and to see that we agree, And then when we do know what we agree on, to go ahead and do that.

So, don't worry too much about the curriculum. We will teach them what is needed and when there is time, we will teach them some other things that they will also like to do.

I want to explain one thing - in selecting certain parents who would like to teach it is very difficult that they would like to teach and then when they have to give up another responsibility, the problem for them is that they make a choice. Now

there are certain activities with us at Chardavogne where a person cannot so easily be missed because he is part of a group and a group is dependent on the different members. They are not loose, they are connected for the object of building. For instance, where it occurs much easier to see (?) than in other activities, one can get a substitute perhaps, but when you are busily engaged in building a house, you're engaged in a total number of people doing that. Otherwise you don't make headway with the house and even if people do have a wish to teach, maybe there is another kind of morality that should prevent them. I've indicated that slightly. I want to leave it to a person's conscience, but I definitely want to say that you must consider whoever wishes to teach, that you have obligations also which you have to fulfill. If you want to teach and you have the time maybe some free afternoon or even in the evening, maybe do it in your free time, but don't do it at the expense of your or other work.

I don't want to end this in a somber kind of way. I'm terribly happy that we've had one year of good experience. I hope we will actually have another year this coming year which will be better. I think on a little different level - more intensity, more knowledgeable, more knowing what to avoid, how to arrange with each other questions of transportation. We're going into the winter, working together for whatever (is?) necessary here to be made - benches, etc. etc. Also financially, I hope you can swing it but you must tell me if you cannot. It is not that I want to release parents from having to contribute. It's necessary that you pay, but maybe with the number of children you have or the conditions in which you happen to live, it may be difficult to bring money into the fund so that some of the teachers may be paid, or other expenses can be met. All of that is group affair, you must know that. But I emphasize the necessity to use this as opportunity for all of us to work together because when you pay, you will wish it to be right. One of the drawbacks of having an ordinary school is that the parents simply pay a little money or maybe at public school he doesn't, and he leaves it entirely to the teacher because he says: well, they're paid for it. And there is immediately a division between a child going to that kind of a school and leaving a family and the family is no longer connected than only asking every once in a while, how was school and maybe you have a couple of problems. Should

I help you with it or can you do it yourself, etc. etc. We know that kind of education. If you become concerned as a parent in wishing to teach and really understand that other children perhaps are different from your own, then maybe you'll be able to work together in the solution of problems that will come up regarding the children and then you can be much more unified. I hope you will be but in any event this kind of an attempt as an experiment can help you to learn for yourself what it is to become a man. By man, I mean a general humam being, no particular male or female - a man, that is, a personality in equilibrium wishing to utilized whatever there is given as an experience for his own growth. If it does that, the children will profit and the school and the school will answer to the requirements which you can set for yourself at the level of decent ethical morality.

Now I should say - now we open the school year, huh? I'll leave that to Donna, and you all, children, are you going to learn? You may as well say no - who doesn't want to learn? Unanimous, isn't it?

Goodnight.

END TAPE

Trans: Judy Jacobs

ROUGH: Jessica 10/18/76

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